GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:158
ANSWERED ON:10.03.2008
DEBT RELIEF FOR FISHERMEN
Ajaya Kumar Shri S.;Thomas Shri P.C.

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the fishermen are facing the problem of acute indebtedness in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government is considering a proposal to constitute a commission for providing debt relief to the fishermen;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether various State Governments have sought debt relief package for the fishermen from the Union Government; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a)to(f): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.158 TO BE ANSWERED ON 10TH MARCH, 2008.

(a)&(b): Yes. Sir. The problem of indebtedness exists among fishermen in varying degrees. The main reasons are presence of middlemen, rising operational costs, lack of opportunities for organized marketing, non-availability of institutional finance, poor saving habits, financial burden of social obligations and seasonality of the vocation.

(c)&(d): No, Sir. However, the State Government of Kerala proposes to set up Fishermen Debt Relief Commission.

(e)&(f): The Union Government has received a proposal from the Government of Kerala for Special Central Assistance to the tune of Rs.424 crore or Ex-gratia assistance from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) towards debt relief of fishermen in Kerala to be disbursed to the concerned fishers through the Fishermen Debt Relief Commission proposed to be set up by the State Government. The matter is under consideration. The Union Government is, however, providing assistance to fishers through implementation of its Centrally Sponsored National Scheme for Welfare of Fishermen.